

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A media handling system for an image forming device configured with a primary media path and a duplex media path, the media handling system comprising:

a media feeder positioned adjacent to one side of the image forming device and configured to input print media into the duplex media path of the image forming device.

2. The media handling system as set forth in claim 1 wherein the duplex media path is a substantially horizontal media path.

3. The media handling system as set forth in claim 1 wherein the media feeder is configured to automatically input non-imaged media into the duplex media path of the image forming device.

4. The media handling system as set forth in claim 1 wherein the media feeder includes a high-capacity media storage unit to store a quantity of media.

5. The media handling system as set forth in claim 1 wherein the media feeder is configured to be detachably mounted to the one side of the image forming device.

6. The media handling system as set forth in claim 1 further comprising a media output unit configured to be positioned adjacent to the one side of the image forming device to receive media discharged from the image forming device.

7. The media handling system as set forth in claim 6 wherein the media feeder and the media output unit are configured to be vertically-stacked to reduce a footprint of the image forming device.

8. The media handling system as set forth in claim 6 wherein the media feeder and the media output unit are integral within a housing.

9. The media handling system as set forth in claim 6 wherein the media output unit includes a media finishing device.

10. A media handling apparatus for inputting non-imaged media into an image forming device having a primary media path along which an image is formed on a print media, the handling apparatus comprising:

a return media path configured to selectively receive imaged print media from the primary media path and return the imaged media to the primary media path for multiple imaging;

a media input unit configured for attachment to one side of an image forming device to input non-imaged media into the return media path of the image forming device; and

a media output unit for receiving imaged media discharged from the primary media path, the media output unit being configured for attachment to the one side of the image forming device and stacked above of the media input unit.

11. The media handling apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein the return media path is a substantially horizontal path.

12. The media handling apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein the media input unit further comprises a media storage unit to store a quantity of non-imaged media.

13. The media handling apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein the media output unit includes a media finishing device.

14. The media handling apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein the media input unit is configured to be detachably mounted to the one side of the image forming device.

15. The media handling apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein the media input unit and the media output unit are integral within a common housing.

16. An image forming apparatus comprising:

a housing having at least one wall;

an image forming unit provided within the housing for forming an image onto print media;

a media storage unit configured to store a supply of non-imaged print media;

a primary media path for carrying print media to the image forming device for imaging;

a duplex media path configured to receive imaged print media from the primary media path and return the imaged print media to the primary media path for duplex imaging; and

the duplex media path being configured to receive non-imaged print media from the media storage unit and to input the non-imaged print media to the primary media path for imaging.

17. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 16 further comprising a media output unit positioned to receive imaged print media discharged from the primary media path where the media storage unit and the media output unit are stacked to reduce a footprint of the image forming apparatus.

18. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 16 further including a media feeder to feed the non-imaged print media from the media storage unit to the duplex media path.

19. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 17 wherein the media storage unit and the media output unit are contained within a common housing.

20. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 16 wherein the media output unit includes a media finishing unit.

21. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 16 further comprising logic to determine whether print media is inputted into the primary media path or the duplex media path.

22. A process of imaging media in an image forming device having an imaging path along which media is imaged and a duplex media path through which imaged media is received from the imaging path, flipped, and returned to the imaging path for duplex imaging, the process comprising the steps of:

inputting media into the duplex media path, by-passing the imaging path;

transferring the media from the duplex media path to the imaging path for imaging;

imaging the media; and

outputting the imaged media from the imaging path.

23. The process as set forth in claim 22 wherein the media is inputted through an opening defined in one side of the image forming device.

24. The process as set forth in claim 23 further including positioning a media feeder to input media through the opening to the duplex media path.

25. The process as set forth in claim 22 wherein the step of inputting media comprises the step of automatically inputting media into the duplex media path.

26. The process as set forth in claim 24 further including stacking an output unit above the media feeder, the output unit being positioned to receive the outputted imaged media.

27. The process as set forth in claim 22 further comprising determining a set of printing parameters to control flow of the media through the imaging path and the duplex media path in accordance with the set of parameters.

28. The process as set forth in claim 22 further comprising the step of finishing the media that is outputted.

29. The process as set forth in claim 26 further comprising the step of storing media in a media storage unit.

30. The process as set forth in claim 22 wherein the inputting and outputting occur on a common side of the image forming device.

31. A process of configuring an image forming device having an imaging path along which media is imaged and a return media path through which imaged media is received from the imaging path and returned to the imaging path for multiple imaging, the process comprising the steps of:

providing access to the return media path through a side of the image forming device;

positioning a media feeder to the side of the image forming device; and

configuring the image forming device where the media feeder can input print media into the return media path.